

# **Integrative Seminar 1**

## **The Congregation in Context: People of God/Body of Christ/Temple of the Spirit** (4.201 a & b)

### **Syllabus**

2013-2014

Maria Erling

*Integration means to uncover links and connect across apparent boundaries. In theological education integration means to identify what is useful and applicable from one's total fund of learning and to synthesize it into a coherent whole informing the vocation of ministry and mission. The work of the seminar involves connecting learning from your reading, the seminary experience and the field setting, using a collegial context to listen to and make productive use of other viewpoints, and developing, identifying, and explicating how God calls us to mission: the vocation of the person and the congregation.*

### **RATIONALE**

Those who prepare for leadership positions in the church need an interpretive framework for understanding congregations. Such a framework brings together theological interpretation with careful observation of human communities.

Congregations are earthen vessels, very human communities. At the same time, they are communities where people hear God's word and share at the table, bearing witness to God's love for the world. Sinners receive forgiveness and are strengthened for service. Congregations, like believers, are complex composites of fallen and forgiven realities.

An integrative approach brings theological traditions into engagement with contemporary realities through conversation, study, reflection, and common deliberation.

### **OUTCOMES**

The course places students in a teaching parish where they learn to integrate theological study with ministry in a parish, or an agency doing public ministry.

The outcomes for the M.Div. degree are addressed in the seminar, but special attention is given to the work of Integration, in number 6:

- 1. Demonstrate engagement in spiritual, Intellectual and ethical formation*
- 2. Interpret God's Word faithfully and thoughtfully as public speakers, listeners, and writers*
- 3. Analyze cultural contexts of ministry*
- 4. Lead a congregation in worship and the pastoral arts*

5. *Relate their denominational tradition in context*
6. *Integrate theological conversation and experience in order to collaborate with peers in ministry in an evangelical and ecumenical manner*

Students will gain the ability to

1. Observe and record ministry priorities of the congregation and correlate this with the needs of the community as well as the theological convictions of their denominational tradition
2. Listen to the way that congregational members talk about their faith in everyday language and correlate this with theological concepts and terms, and with biblical images and stories.
3. Assess the effectiveness of a congregation's witness and service in its community by looking at communication methods, relationships that are nurtured and supported, and diakonia efforts.

## **STRATEGIES – SCHEDULE**

[The schedule is subject to change; please check web-site under Field Education, especially in the second term]

### **FALL SEMESTER**

#### **MODULE ONE: THE CONGREGATION AS A CENTER OF COMMUNICATION**

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|-----------------|---|
| <b>Sept. 4</b>  | First class for IS One 10:15am – orientation to Integrative Seminars and Teaching parish  |
| <b>Sept. 18</b> | Teaching Parish mentors meet at 9:00am with Dr. Erling<br>Mentors and students meet at 11:00am in Valentine Hall Room 206   |
| <b>Sept. 22</b> | <b>Sunday</b> Begin year in the Teaching Parish   |
| <b>Oct. 2</b>   | <b>Words and the Word of God: Theological Study Of the Congregation</b> Reading: <i>What's Theology got to do with it?</i> Anthony B. Robinson Introduction      Chapters 1 & 2, discussion |
| <b>Oct. 9</b>   | <b>Scripture and the Living Word in the Congregation</b><br>Reading: Robinson Chapter 3, discussion   |

- Oct. 16**            **Tools for Ministry: Communication Audit**
- Oct. 28-Nov. 1**        **Fall Academy at the Crossroads**
- Oct. 30**            **No class, but Communication Audit due – turn in to Katie Dodds, Valentine Office #123**

## **MODULE TWO: THE CONGREGATION AND STEWARDSHIP**

- Nov. 6**            **The Trinity and Relationships –How we belong to God**  
Reading: Robinson, chapters 4 & 5, discussion
- Nov. 13**        **Tools for Ministry: A Stewardship audit**  
Reading: Robinson, chapters 6, 7 & 8, discussion
- Dec. 4**            **PANEL DISCUSSION I – Stewardship and relationships in the congregation**

**Stewardship Audit and Theological Reflection** – 3 pages to report on the stewardship audit and 3 pages of theological reflection. **6 pgs in all.** double spaced.

Paper guidelines: Examine the theological language that surfaces in the audits you are doing – and correlate it with the theological reading you are doing in the course readings.

- 1.) What are the “core convictions” or the theological guideposts of the congregation/agency as communicated to its members?
- 2.) How is stewardship presented? How do the pastors, diaconal leaders, and teachers use scripture stories, images, to define the identity of the congregation/agency and show how it is accountable?
- 3.) Who/what does the congregation/agency belong to, and in what ways is it accountable?
- 4.) Offer a critique: what gaps do you see in the congregations understanding & action? What are the strengths?

**The paper is due on the last class day of the term: December 20**

### **JANUARY TERM**

J term ends on Jan. 24, 2014 and the Spring Semester begins on January 30, 2014. The “Human Relations Workshop” [information on this workshop go to [www.ltsg.edu](http://www.ltsg.edu); Offices; Registrar; January Term 2014] will be on January 27 & 28, and we recommend doing the workshop as a first year student, if possible, as it provides a good foundation for this course’s focus on context.

## SPRING SEMESTER

### MODULE THREE: DIAKONIA AND MINISTRY IN THE WORLD

- Feb. 5**      **Images for the Church that include all of God's people**  
Reading: Robinson chs. 9 &-10
- Feb. 12**      **Tools for Ministry: Diakonia Audit**  
**Imagining God's Future:**
- Feb. 26**      **Inside an urban congregation in the period of the civil rights struggle in Omaha, NE** *Time for Burning*

Note: work hard to complete work on teaching parish diakonia audit-this information will be necessary to include in the end of term paper, but is not due as a separate assignment

### MODULE FOUR: LOCAL CASE STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN WITNESS

- March 12**      **Visions of God's possibilities**  
Reading: Robinson chs. 11 & 12-small group meeting
- March 19**      **Tools for Ministry: Team Audits of area congregations Planning session to prepare for visits**
- Visiting dates either Sunday March 23 or Sunday, March 30**
- April 2**      **Presentations by teams**
- April 9**      **Presentations by teams**
- \*Spring Break –over Holy Week**  
**no classes April 17-22**  
Easter is Sunday April 20
- April 28-May 2 Spring Academy at the Crossroads**
- Early May**      **Possible excursion to Diaconal Ministry sites**
- May 7**      Hand in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester paper 6 pages, to Katie Dodds, Valentine Office #123

### **Relating our audits to an understanding of the church. Ecclesiology**

Guidelines: Reflect on the nature of the church in your teaching parish setting.

1. How does the congregation understand itself as a church as opposed to a social gathering, political force, family place, or community service center?
2. Does the context (suburban, urban, rural or small town) inform or limit its vision for ministry?
3. When facing change how does this congregation draw on its core convictions, or theological tradition?

### **ASSESSMENT**

Please note: While scholarly freedom is a right of all, civility and decency is a responsibility of all. The practice of inclusive language is expected in this course, along with the discouragement of speech and metaphors that demean any individual or group.

1. Complete all readings and participate in panel discussions.
2. Complete all written assignments according to rules of style for academic papers. (For the standard, see Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers or the Chicago Manual of Style*.)

Three audits – communication, stewardship, and diakonia audits will be turned in. The first audit – communication will receive comments but no grade. The stewardship and diakonia audits will be integrated with the short theological essay 6 pages due at the end of each semester.

3. A group report on a visit to a congregation where team members will assess the communication, stewardship understanding, and diakonia activities of a congregation using the ministry tools/audits used by the students in their teaching parish.

**Rubrics for assessing the two papers:** This class is Pass/Fail but the papers will get a letter grade.

**Superior, A** The stewardship audit will be integrated with insights from course readings, and classroom presentations, using proper citation [Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style]. The paper will demonstrate the student's ability to report on and in addition analyze the theological dimensions of a congregation's understanding of stewardship, including recognition of denominational traditions, or ways that the congregation may have room to grow theologically.

**Competent, B** The stewardship audit will be integrated with course readings and classroom presentations and including proper citation [Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style]. The paper will demonstrate the student's ability to detect and report on theological themes present in the congregation's understanding of its relationships.

**Satisfactory, C** The paper reports on the stewardship audit, but has only limited, or perfunctory mention of the course readings, or classroom presentations, without integrating or analyzing the ways that the congregation understands stewardship theologically.

### **Teaching Parish Assessments**

Forms are found at [www.ltsg.edu](http://www.ltsg.edu); Offices, Teaching Parish for teaching/preaching events to be scheduled by the supervisor-number of times depends on track of study.

### TEXTBOOKS

#### **Required Readings:**

Robinson, Anthony B. *What's Theology got to do with it?* The Alban Institute, 2006

Robinson, Anthony B. *Stewardship for Vital Congregations* The Pilgrim Press, 2011

## **Descriptive Report for 2013- 2014**

Integrative Seminar One 4.201 a and b

\_\_\_\_\_ has/has not satisfied the requirements of the course.

Written work and classroom participation reflected

Superior, Competent, Satisfactory level of mastery over these outcomes:

- 1.) Observe and record ministry priorities of the congregation and correlate this with the needs of the community as well as the theological convictions of their denominational tradition
- 2.) Listen to the way that congregational members talk about their faith in everyday language and correlate this with theological concepts and terms, and with biblical images and stories.
- 3.) Assess the effectiveness of a congregation's witness and service in its community by looking at communication methods, relationships that are nurtured and supported through stewardship, and diakonia efforts.

Additional Comments:

Faculty Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_